

# NSLS

## USERS' EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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UEC Chair

The UEC represents the interests of the users to NSLS and BNL Administrations as well as to the community outside BNL. Those interests include continued access to reliable X-ray and UV beams and to a working environment supportive of their research. Almost 2400 users carried out experiments at the NSLS during 1998. "Users" are defined as researchers who actually showed up at the User Administration Office and were given access to the experimental floor to perform experiments on a beamline. With over 97% reliability on both X-ray and UV storage rings, most users are satisfied that the NSLS can provide what they need to fulfil their research obligations. More and more of these users however, are regarding the NSLS as an extension of their home laboratory and this raises issues of access to resources and infrastructure. In order to transmit those interests as "cleanly" as possible, the UEC has studiously cultivated its independence from the NSLS Administration, while closely coordinating efforts with it to improve services for the user. The UEC provides independent advice with minimal influence from the Laboratory or Light Source.

There are several avenues for users to express opinions and suggestions, on subjects as varied as the availability of consumables for experiments to the impact of changing the characteristics of the storage rings. Examples include prompting the NSLS to send out regular news announcements to keep the user community informed about the general goings on. A problem of security for privately ordered specialty gas bottles was brought to the attention of the UEC and a commitment to provide a locked and controlled space under management of the operations coordinator was made by the NSLS. Several Special Interest Groups (SpIGs) serve specific experiments or techniques and information on these can be found at the following web address - <http://www.nsls.bnl.gov/UserGrp/spiginfo.html>. The SpIG-representatives, as members of the UEC, can transmit a user's concerns. These representatives were elected in an electronic ballot for the first time in 1999 thanks to the efforts of Malcolm Capel (BNL - Biology) and Carl Zimba (NIST). Quarterly town meetings are held in the NSLS

seminar room and this provides another opportunity for users to voice users' concerns. While most of the attendees at these meetings are frequent users, local beamline contacts and NSLS staff, I urge everyone who can make these meetings to do so or to email concerns to any UEC member or SpIG representative. Again, details are posted on the NSLS web site. With the NSLS and BNL staff in attendance, there are opportunities for immediate discussion and feedback. The UEC then meets with NSLS and BNL staff and management to discuss relevant issues after the Town Meeting.

The main topics at recent UEC meetings have been the fate of the weekend food service and participation in a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) formed to advise the laboratory on its operations and their potential impact on the broader Long Island community. The users attending the town meetings were able to assure BNL Management of their strong desire to have access to food on the BNL campus during weekends, and as a result of this input Management established expanded food service hours on both Saturdays and Sundays at the Center. As for maintaining a reasoned voice in the CAC, the UEC is grateful to Jean Jordan-Sweet (IBM) for advancing our interests from the early planning stages of the advisory group. Peter Stephens (SUNY @ Stony Brook, past UEC-chair) has recently joined her as an alternate UEC-representative. The relationship between BNL and the community is a delicate one. It is one with the potential to help or harm the interests of NSLS users. We all hope the independent voice of the UEC will be heeded in this forum.

Many users operate research programs at more than one light source, and the four DOE-funded synchrotrons (NSLS, APS, SSRL and ALS) have similar interests in terms of maintaining viable and expanding research programs. In recognition of their common interests in synchrotron radiation research, the chairs of the User groups at NSLS, APS and SSRL co-signed a letter urging the implementation of a BESAC-report recommendation for increased funding for synchrotron research. The letter read, in part: "Our communities are growing rapidly, and demand for beam time continues to increase at each

facility. . .we'd like to offer the assistance of our community by providing full support of DOE efforts to acquire the necessary additional funds to fully implement the Birgeneau-Shen recommendations and continue support for other important areas in the ER program." In addition to such joint letters, further user group coordination on issues such as funding and joint meetings of the light source chairs are in the best interests of the whole synchrotron community.

The Annual Users' Meeting, funded largely out of registration and vendor fees, is the most visible function organized by the UEC. Along with celebrating scientific accomplishments, the meeting serves to bring changes and proposed changes, which have the potential to alter the physical and intellectual environment in which the users operate, to their attention. This meeting is an opportunity for the UEC to devise workshops, invite overview talks from leaders in the arenas of science and science administration, and to set a tone for the year to come by electing representatives to join the UEC. The 1998 meeting was a great success thanks mainly to the efforts of workshop organizers, and particularly John Hill who attracted one of the best slate of speakers on record for the one-day Users' meeting. Excellent presentations emphasized science, the future of the NSLS, and DOE funding initiatives. The need to improve infrastructure and user support were common themes of the talks by

John Marburger, Director of the BNL, Michael Hart, Chairman of the NSLS, Robert Marianelli, Director of the Division of Chemical Sciences for the Office of Basic Energy Sciences (BES) and Dr. Ernest J. Moniz, Under Secretary of Energy at the US Department of Energy. A complete report appears in Section 3 of this Activity Report. Apart from the annual meeting, the UEC from time to time uses its funds to further the science agenda and advertise the capabilities of the Light Source. To this end the UEC was among the sponsors of the Montauk conference on Inelastic X-ray Scattering in November 1998 and helped with other activities which raised the profile of the NSLS at other conferences.

I am grateful to all the members of the UEC (see photograph with this article), to the User Administration Office and to the staff of the NSLS for all their efforts over the past year. Some, such as the restoration of power during the unscheduled shutdown in December 1997, were Herculean efforts. More typically they involve the steady production of high quality beams. They also include patient implementation of DOE directives, and mollifying users who run afoul of these, the planning of meetings, the compilation of this Activity Report, and many other efforts impacting every user. Whether they are aware of them or not, the user community depends on these efforts to produce the science presented in this annual report. I am grateful to you all. ■



Users' Executive Committee and  
Special Interest Group Representatives

Seated: Malcolm Capel (BNL-Biology), Lisa Kelly (U. of Maryland); Michael Dudley (SUNY @ Stony Brook); John Parise (SUNY @ Stony Brook); Jean Jordan-Sweet (IBM); Luz Martinez-Miranda (U. of Maryland); Carol Hirschmugl (U. of Wisconsin); Mark Chance (Albert Einstein College of Medicine).

Standing: Eva Rothman (NSLS); George Cody (Carnegie Inst. of Wash.); Joel Brock (Cornell U.); Steve Whisnant (U. of S. Carolina); Paul Stevens (Exxon); Gwyn Williams (NSLS); Larry Carr (NSLS); Barbara Illman (U. of Wisconsin/USDA Forest Products Lab).